

Universal Periodic Review – 22nd session

Statement by Ireland on the Review of Panama

6 May 2015

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Panama and thanks it for the presentation of its report.

Ireland notes Panama's increased cooperation with the UN human rights system, particularly through increased engagement with OHCHR as well as through the extension of a standing invitation to the special procedures mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council.

Ireland welcomes the progress made by Panama since its last review including the ratification of several international human rights instruments, the introduction of legislation on the rights of indigenous peoples and steps taken to curb prison overcrowding and improve the functioning of the judiciary.

Despite the progress made since Panama's last review, Ireland is concerned by reports of the prevalence of discrimination against indigenous, ethnic and sexual minorities. These minorities face the denial of their rights to political participation and access to employment and basic services including health care, education, clean water and sanitation. Ireland **recommends** that Panama adopt and implement comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation which prohibits discrimination on all grounds including on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Ireland notes with great concern reports of restrictions on freedom of assembly and association, in particular with regard to the activities of trades unions. These include the enactment of restrictive laws, the prosecution of trade union leaders, the violent suppression of trade union protests and the refusal to register trade unions even in the face of Supreme Court decisions ordering their recognition. Ireland **recommends** that Panama fully respect its international obligations regarding the freedoms of assembly and of association, in particular with regard to the activities of trades unions, and ensure that its national legislation complies with these obligations.